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TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE

TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

ON

FY 2006 BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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Mr. Chairman, Mr. Abercrombie, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Defense Department's budget request for FY 2006. Joining me today are Lieutenant General Keys and Lieutenant General Corley from the Air Force and Assistant Secretary Young, Vice Admiral Sestak, and Brigadier General Post, representing our Navy/Marine Corps team.

The FY 2006 defense budget reflects the priorities set by the President and an implementation plan developed by the Secretary and his most senior military and civilian advisors. The budget was drafted in light of the progress that has been made—and the changes that have taken place—since September 11, 2001. As such, it responds to the need to prepare for an uncertain future that will require a more agile, lethal, and responsive force. At the same time, to ensure that we maximize the capabilities gained from our defense dollars, the budget seeks to eliminate duplicative efforts across the force, particularly in mission areas where the United States already enjoys substantial advantages.

In developing the budget request, the Secretary and his senior advisors were guided by a series of priorities. Three of those priorities are particularly relevant to the questions that the Subcommittee is examining today:

- The challenge of having to move military forces rapidly around the globe
- The need to operate seamlessly as a joint force
- The need to adjust to a new world, where some of the most worrisome threats come from rogue regimes and extremist cells that can work together, share information, and spread lethal capabilities among potential adversaries.

In this context, let me address some of the questions that Chairman Weldon forwarded to Secretary Rumsfeld.

Joint Air Dominance

The Department of Defense is transforming its aviation combat forces to meet new national security challenges. In doing so, it is exploiting existing capabilities where possible and developing new capabilities as necessary. The FY 2006 budget does propose changes to the mix of tactical aircraft to be procured, primarily in FY 2007 and beyond. The service representatives here today can speak to the specifics; I would like to say a few words about the context for those changes.

In the current and projected security environment, controlling the skies—or maintaining "air dominance"—requires joint force capabilities. The joint concept of air dominance includes manned and unmanned aircraft, intelligence and surveillance, weapons, command and control, and the networks to integrate the joint capabilities. This is the context that we use to develop and evaluate our investment plans.

The Navy F/A-18E/F is a derivative of earlier F/A-18 designs, providing much improved range, weapons payload, survivability, growth potential, and efficiency. The F/A-18E/F is a multirole aircraft optimized for air-to-ground attack but also fully capable of meeting fleet air superiority and air defense needs. The E/F variant can be fitted with special tanks, enabling it to refuel other aircraft in flight. Further, some F/A-18E/Fs will be equipped with reconnaissance pods.

The F/A-22 is currently in testing. The aircraft is expected to excel in air-to-air operations, offering unique capabilities not provided by fighter aircraft in the force today. It is

designed to have superior speed, agility, air-to-air weapon loads, and overall survivability. Significant cost increases have been incurred over the life of the program, and substantial additional investments will be needed to achieve the full air-to-ground capabilities envisioned for the aircraft. Accordingly, we have programmed funds in the Future Years Defense Program for upgrades key to attaining the capability goals.

The Joint Strike Fighter is a multirole aircraft, capable of both air-to-air and air-to-ground operations. It is expected to excel in ground attack missions, having greater range, additional air-to-ground sensors, a wider array of ground attack weapons, and an ability to carry a heavier internal ground attack payload than the F/A-22. The JSF has also encountered cost growth. Recently, the design team has made significant progress in controlling the weight increases that emerged over the past few years. The JSF is expected to significantly outperform today's short takeoff and vertical landing (STOVL) aircraft. It will provide stealth, improved target location capability, and an extended operating radius to our large fleets of land-based F-16s and carrier-based F/A-18s. We plan to buy JSF in the numbers needed to outfit a large share of the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps tactical fleets.

Meanwhile, our current aircraft have proven to be highly effective in very demanding missions conducted in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. In short, we are strong today in air dominance and have a balanced plan to improve the tactical aviation forces of the three services with investments in the F/A-18, F/A-22, and JSF. Analyses now underway will provide additional insights into the Department's joint air dominance capabilities for the Secretary of Defense's consideration in the QDR.

Intratheater Airlift and Tactical Aerial Refueling

The challenges posed by the new security environment caused us to review carefully the capabilities already provided by our forces. The Department currently possesses a significant capability in intratheater airlift, including well over 300 newer C-130Hs and C-130Js. Previous studies have indicated that the Department has sufficient intratheater capability. Currently, the Department's Mobility Capability Study is examining the intratheater airlift needed to support the defense strategy. Because the current fleet includes aging aircraft, the Department will continue to assess risk levels, particularly in light of restrictions recently placed upon a portion of the Air Force C-130 fleet. The budget proposal includes funding for a C-130 Avionics Modernization Program to address aging. Furthermore, Marine Corps variants continue to be purchased to replace aging KC-130 tanker aircraft. Implementing these programs will provide additional time for the Department to consider recapitalization options, such as an advanced follow-on tactical airlifter.

Airborne Electronic Attack

Airborne Electronic Attack (AEA) capabilities are vital to the ability of tactical aircraft to operate in contested airspace. Advanced land-based air defenses, capable of being relocated on short notice, pose a significant threat to U.S. and coalition air forces. Recent operational experience—in particular, Operation Allied Force over Kosovo—has demonstrated the importance of AEA support in countering this threat. The preferred approach to airspace access is to destroy enemy air defenses, but a capable enemy can be expected to keep mobile missile defenses intact through their frequent relocation. Accordingly, AEA effects, which can be generated on very short notice against such so-called "pop up" threats, are essential to the success of future air operations.

Over the next ten to twelve years, the Department will improve the capabilities of the existing fleet of EA-6B aircraft and Navy units will transition to the EA-18G. The Air Force plans to add standoff jamming capabilities to the B-52 bomber force. This approach will

continue to provide AEA support from land bases and carriers, while taking advantage of the unrivaled long range, endurance, and high-power jamming potential of B-52 aircraft. These systems will be augmented by an unmanned "stand in" capability in the form of the Miniature Air-Launched Decoy (MALD). The Air Force is currently leading the development of this small, expendable loitering system, which will perform both decoy and radar jamming functions.

A related technology also under development is the Joint Unmanned Combat Air System (J-UCAS). The projected air vehicle could be employed in a variety of roles, including air defense suppression. Two X-45A demonstrator aircraft have been flying at Edwards Air Force Base in a successful initial experiment with this platform type. The budget request proposes shifting J-UCAS management from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to the military departments, with the Air Force serving as the program lead. The ongoing DARPA work has been very productive in identifying technology development options and key program management issues, such as the new demands being made in integrating the air vehicle and ground control systems. We want to build on the considerable success that has been demonstrated at Edwards to conduct an early operational assessment of this exciting new technology.

Joint Common Missile

The Joint Common Missile (JCM) program was terminated for a variety of reasons—the proven capability of current joint munitions and platforms against vehicles and fixed targets, the development of several new precision munitions, and the narrowness of gaps that JCM was to fill. An independent OSD analysis identified cost and schedule risks to the program. The Army, JCM's executive agent, estimated a four-year development time. The independent analysis projected at least a six-year development period, and costs for procurement and RDT&E that were 20 percent and 39 percent higher, respectively, than the services' estimates.

Good alternatives for JCM exist. The Hellfire II—also a joint Army, Navy, and Marine Corps program—worked well in Operation Iraqi Freedom and is still in production. The Air Force is refurbishing Mavericks and developing the Small Diameter Bomb (SDB) Increment 2 to field the same capabilities as JCM.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has been directed, through the JROC/JCIDS processes, to determine the precision air-to-ground capabilities needed for fixed-wing tactical aircraft, rotary-wing aircraft, and unmanned air vehicles in the future.

Quadrennial Defense Review

The 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) is examining the full range of national defense challenges. As part of the QDR, the Administration is evaluating its aviation combat force plans in light of capabilities, risks, and opportunities. The review of the investment plan will look, in particular, at how joint capabilities contribute to air dominance. Thus, the QDR will address a number of the broad questions posed in the Subcommittee's letter of February 23, 2005.

America has the finest fighting force on the face of the earth. We plan to keep it that way.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.